

## **“Realms of Experience” – by Ven Dr M. Punnaji Maha Thera**

**Samādhiṃ bhikkhave, bhāvētha. Samāhito bhikkhave,  
bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.** (*Samyutta Nikāya, Vol. V: 414*)

Do develop stillness of mind (*samādhi*), Oh! Bhikkhus. One, whose mind is still, is aware of how things come to be (*samāhite citte yathābhutaṃ pajānāti*).

### **What does he become aware of, as to how it comes to be?**

It is nothing but the awareness of the **Contingent Concurrence** (*Paticca Samuppāda*) of how things come to be which is stated in the **Four-Fold Sublime Reality** (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*):

He becomes aware, “this is the insecurity of life.”

He becomes aware, “this is the cause of insecurity.”

He becomes aware, “this is the cessation of insecurity.”

He becomes aware, “this is the way to the cessation of insecurity.”

**Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa, paññā natthi ajhāyato,  
Yamhi jhānaṃ ca paññā ca sa ve nibbānasantike.** (*Dhammapada verse #372*)

There is no ecstasy (*jhāna*) for one who has no insight (*paññā*),

There is no insight (*paññā*) for one who has no ecstasy (*jhāna*),

One who has both ecstasy (*jhāna*) and insight (*paññā*),

Is in the proximity of **Nibbāna**.

According to the Buddha, there is no Insight (*paññā*) without Stillness of Mind (*samādhi*).

There are four levels of **Ecstasy** (*Jhāna*):

1. First Ecstasy – inference, inquiry, rapture, comfort, stillness
2. Second Ecstasy – rapture, comfort, stillness
3. Third Ecstasy – comfort, stillness
4. Fourth Ecstasy – stillness, introspection

The word “**ecstasy**” means “standing out” (withdrawing) from the **Sensual Realm** (*kāma-bhava*) and reverting to the **Imagery Realm** (*rūpa-bhava*).

It is important to note there are 3 Realms of Experience:

- I) **Sensual** Realm of Experience (*kāma-bhava*)
- II) **Imagery** Realm of Experience (*rūpa-bhava*)
- III) **Imageless** Realm of Experience (*arūpa-bhava*)